

Masonic Lodge EL SOL NASCIENTE celebrates its 85th Anniversary



At 98, Art Krottbauer is the oldest member of El Sol Naciente. He was initiated in 1932, 73 years ago. He hopes to live to be 100 to celebrate his 75th Masonic anniversary.

On the 15th of November of 1920, after a struggle that lasted almost nine years, a group of seven Arubans belonging to the Masonic Lodge of Curacao finally received from the Grand East of the Netherlands the Charter that formally recognized the Masonic Lodge "El Sol Naciente" of Aruba. On the 15th of November 2005 the current members of the now well-known Lodge will observe the 85th anniversary with a solemn laying of a wreath at the Masonic monument on L.G. Smith Boulevard in memory of those brethren who have laid down their working tools. On the 19th of November the members and their wives will celebrate with a formal banquet at the Lodge preceded by a special commemorative ceremony.

The seven pioneering Arubans were all prominent members of the Aruban community: C. H. Eman, A.L. Scholten, H. J. Schreuder, H. Yrausquin Lampe, L.J.M. Henriquez, S.A.A. Henriquez and a Mr. Veeris whose first name is lost to the ages. Since in those days no Roman Catholic was allowed to become a Mason, this group did not represent the cross-section of the local community as the members do today, but even then the membership showed diversity in different aspects. Some were merchants, others civil servants, teachers and there was at least one shoemaker. L.J.M. "Nadi" Henriquez, grandfather of the current president of the Aruba Central Bank, was elected the first Worshipful Master (Leader) of the new Lodge. The present Worshipful Mas-

ter is Karel Wever, owner of the Wema home and hardware stores.

In the beginning El Sol Naciente held its meetings at a small building east of the old Protestant Church on Wilhelminastraat. In the late 1920s it rented the second floor of the wooden building on Klipstraat behind the Protestant Church in Oranjestad, at the corner west of Driftwood restaurant. The ground floor used to be the Aruba Post Office. It has since been demolished but the old concrete floors can still be seen. The current Lodge building in Cumana in front of Codemsa was consecrated in 1997.

At first the Lodge meetings were conducted in Spanish since the rituals came from Lodge Igualdad. Many Americans who came to Aruba with the oil refinery were members of Masonic Lodges in their hometowns and became members of El Sol Naciente. Others became members here. The Americans soon became the majority. Since they did not speak Spanish they obtained the rituals in English from the United States. Much later, after World War II, El Sol Naciente started to receive its rituals from Holland that were then translated into English. To this date English is the "official" language at El Sol Naciente.

The expatriate Masons continued to swell the membership and in 1962 it reached 167 members. The exodus of the Americans as a result of the lay-off program at Lago precipitated a sharp drop in the membership and by 1968 there were only 26 members. But the Lodge again began to



The earliest members of El Sol Naciente, circa 1921. Sitting, left to right: Richard Johannes Eman, S.A.A. "Siltro" Henriquez, X. Veeris, J.K. Zepp Lampe, Raúl Yrausquin, Anton L. Scholten. Standing I. "Dego" Frigerio, L.J.M. "Nadi" Henriquez, Horacio Yrausquin-Lampe, H.J. Schreuder

grow. Perhaps because the relationship between the Pope and Freemasonry had improved significantly more and more Roman Catholics applied for membership. Today El Sol Naciente has over 80 members, most of them Roman Catholics, and it is the second largest Lodge under the Dutch jurisdiction, which also includes the Netherlands Antilles, Surinam, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The oldest living member of El Sol Naciente is Art Krottbauer, a former Lago expatriate from the United States, married to Nydia van Meeteren, sister of the well-known Aruban insurance adjuster Karel Van Meeteren. Brother Art, who turned 98 this year was installed in 1932, 73 years ago! Brother Art's greatest wish right now is to live to be 100 and complete his 75th year as a member of his beloved Lodge. Meanwhile he continues to maintain close contacts with his brothers at El Sol Naciente. Art and Nydia live in Pennsylvania.

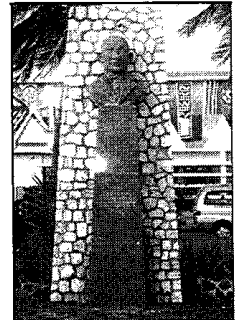
Masons have always fought against dictatorship, injustice and suffering. Most of the signers of the United States Declaration of Independence, including George Washington, were Masons. Most of the Venezuelan heroes entombed in the Panteón of Caracas were Masons. Martí, the Liberator of Cuba, San Martín of Argentina and O'Higgins, the Liberator of Chile, were Masons. The famous Dutch writer Edward Douwes Dekker wrote "Multatuli" (I have suffered much) to protest against the abuses of the Dutch colonial system in the then Dutch East Indies. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote The Magic Flute in protest against the persecutions by the empress Marie Therese. Leaders of the French Revolution championed Jean-Jacques Rousseau's political ideals. Henry Dunant inspired the founding



The first El Sol Naciente Lodge Building was located on Klipstraat behind the Protestant Church in Oranjestad at the corner west of where Driftwood Restaurant is located. The ground floor was the Aruba Post office. The building has been demolished but the concrete floor can still be seen.

of the International Red Cross to combat the sufferings of war victims.

Many famous men in all parts of the world are or had been Masons. John Glenn, the first American to go into orbit was a Mason, and so was Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin who together with Neil Armstrong, were the first two men to walk on the moon. Ludwig von Beethoven and many other famous musicians throughout the centuries, from Sibelius to "Satchmo" have been Masons. In the arts, literature, science, business, industry, medicine, politics, sports, army, indeed in just about all facets of human endeavor, Masons have left their marks. On Aruba also Masons have distinguished themselves earning the respect and admiration of the community for their meritorious work. Many Masons have been recognized and honored by civic, cultural and sports organizations. Over the years the Queen has elevated perhaps over one hundred Masons in Aruba to Knight or Officer in the Order of Oranje Nassau. Of the living members of the Aruban Masonic Lodges at least ten are



Lloyd G. Smith, President and General Manager of Lago was honored with this statue in front of the Cas di Cultura for his meritorious works for Aruba. Brother Lloyd was member of Lodge El Sol Naciente and co-founded Lodge King Solomon.

Knights or Officers of the Royal Order.

One of the tenets of Freemasonry is charity to those in need. In the United States Freemasonry contributes the equivalent of approximately four million dollars daily, yes, daily. This money goes especially in free medical care at the 19 Burn Institutes and 3 Crippled Children's hospitals all over the United States. Here in Aruba El Sol Naciente Charitable Society helps the needy, especially school children, anonymously.

The Masonic monument on L.G. Smith Boulevard was unveiled in 1990 in connection with the 70th Anniversary of El Sol Naciente. There are also statues of two Masons on Aruba. One is that of Lloyd G. Smith in front of Cas di Cultura. Brother Lloyd was a longtime member of El Sol Naciente and one of the co-founders of Lodge King Solomon. The other Masonic statue is of the most famous Mason of South America: The man on horseback in front of Sociedad Bolivariaa, General Simon Bolivar.

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